



Thornton Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119907
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291565
Inspection date 14 November 2006
Reporting inspector Chris Kessell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main Street
School category	Community		Thornton
Age range of pupils	4-10		Coalville LE67 1AH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01530 230250
Number on roll (school)	100	Fax number	01530 230250
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jacqui Price
		Headteacher	Russell Williams
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small school serves the village of Thornton. Most pupils are White British. The vast majority of children join the school with attainment that is at the level expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average, as is the percentage entitled to free school meals. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. They leave at the end of Year 5 to join secondary school. There have been a high number of changes to staffing in the last few years.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has a number of strengths, most of which relate to the pupils' good personal development and effective pastoral care. Pupils are well looked after. One pupil said, 'Staff are always there to help us', and other pupils present agreed enthusiastically. Pupils enjoy all the school has to offer and this is reflected, for example, in the enthusiasm they show for the good range of extra-curricular activities provided. A particular strength is the welcoming family atmosphere where all pupils are known, valued and fully included in all activities. One parent summarised the views of many others when writing that pupils benefit from the 'understanding and care' provided by staff.

Key areas of the school's provision that influence pupils' achievement, such as teaching and learning and the curriculum, are satisfactory and have some strengths. As a result, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and, from the time they start in Reception, they make satisfactory progress. Standards are average in Years 2 and 5. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. Teachers do their best to ensure that pupils are provided with work that is appropriate to individual needs and understanding. Day-to-day assessment of lessons is good but this information is not used well to check the bigger picture of 'where pupils are at and where they are going'. The setting of academic targets and pupils' personal individual targets is not having sufficient impact on improving pupils' achievement. This leads to inconsistencies in pupils' progress, with some groups making good progress, and others not doing as well as they should. A number of pupils are unable to identify their own learning targets and how they are supposed to reach them. Because of this, care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory overall.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Leadership has created a good climate for learning and the staff team work well together, despite a significant number of the teaching staff being relatively new to the school. There is a strong commitment to raising standards but the school is not effective in ensuring that there are adequate checks for how well pupils are doing to enable pupils to make better progress in their learning. This is recognised by the school and is an area for development. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school has successfully addressed its key issues and staff and governors both show a commitment to moving the school forward. There is the necessary capacity to develop further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils make good progress by monitoring their performance more effectively.
- Improve procedures for setting academic targets and pupils' individual targets so that they contribute effectively to improving pupils' achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children are given a satisfactory start to their education in Reception. They make steady progress so that by the time they join Year 1, most have achieved levels of attainment similar to that found in most schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the rest of the school so that they reach average standards in Years 2 and 5. Pupils with learning difficulties are able to make the same progress as their classmates because they are given good support, particularly by teaching assistants.

The school recognises that there are inconsistencies in the progress pupils make and this is reflected in its own data. Academic targets are not challenging enough and the school acknowledges that this is an area for development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good attendance levels reflect pupils' enjoyment of school. Their good attitudes, behaviour and relationships are significant factors in their development as confident, responsible and mature members of the school. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy through the school's strong focus on healthy eating and physical activities. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that bullying is not a problem. This was summed up by one pupil who said, 'Occasionally things go wrong, but mostly everyone gets on really well with each other'. Parents support this viewpoint. Pupils are encouraged to develop skills that contribute effectively to their future learning and well-being. For example, they collaborate well with each other in lessons and are confident in giving their views and answering questions. Pupils are not afraid to get things wrong and are happy to request help when they find things difficult. A strength of the school is the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is good. Pupils enthusiastically undertake responsibilities in school, and in the wider community, such as supporting charities and participating in village activities. They are taught well to show tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others and are developing a good understanding of their own and other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers relate well to their pupils and lessons are interesting and enjoyable. As a result, pupils want to do their best and the vast majority try hard. Teachers and support staff work effectively together. For example, in Reception, the classteacher and nursery nurse plan a good range of interesting activities. These ensure that the children experience different activities, some of which are led by adults, and others, the children undertake by themselves.

Teachers throughout the school give pupils work that is pitched at the right level for all pupils in mixed-age classes. This is generally successful, although there are times when pupils are not always challenged sufficiently. Teachers' marking is often good at assessing pupils' work and providing them with information on how to improve but this is not consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curriculum provision is improving. The school is currently developing aspects of its number work and pupils' writing. It is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives on raising standards. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school has rightly identified the need to improve opportunities for children's creative development and outdoor learning. Effective rolling programmes in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 5 have been established and these ensure pupils are able to study a good range of subjects. Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved considerably since the last inspection. Weaknesses identified in special educational needs provision have also been addressed. Positive links are being developed across the curriculum, enabling pupils to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and computer skills in other subjects. The curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' healthy lifestyles and understanding of how to keep safe. Good enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors and out-of-school activities contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils say that they are well cared for and know who to approach if they experience difficulties. Careful attention is paid to health and safety and to child protection arrangements, and the school site is secure. Pupils know who to approach if they experience difficulties. Good links with parents and a range of local agencies promote pupils' welfare, health and safety. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet new government standards. Induction and transfer procedures help pupils to settle quickly and happily into new routines. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good support because their provision is effectively organised. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils feel confident that they are provided with sufficient information through marking and oral feedback from teachers to improve their work. They are not so certain about their personal learning targets, which are having a limited impact on enabling them to make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school has coped with recent staff changes effectively. The headteacher has successfully inducted four newly qualified teachers in the last three years. A calm, friendly and orderly learning environment has been maintained. The headteacher, staff

and governors work well together as a team. They have a good understanding of what needs to be done. Their self-evaluation is accurate and linked appropriately to the achievement of the pupils. Staff recognise the need to ensure that the school continues to develop so that all pupils make good progress. Staff benefit from professional support and development and everyone is developing their roles to support school improvement.

Governance is satisfactory. The governors are committed to and supportive of the school. They fully understand that they should hold the school to account. Although they fulfil their responsibilities for the strategic development of the school, they acknowledge that they are not sufficiently involved in improvement planning. Effective financial management has ensured that the school is well presented, well equipped and well staffed. Parents are pleased that their views are important and that their suggestions and concerns are listened to.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us and being so helpful when we came to see how well your school is doing. Your parents think it is a very friendly place and we agree.

There are many good things about your school. You play and work together well. Behaviour in the school is good and all of the adults make sure that you are well cared for. You are given help to reach your learning targets, but not all of you understand what your targets are. You are keen to answer questions and most of you work hard in lessons. The school provides you with lots of activities during lunchtime and after school that you all enjoy.

You try very hard in lessons and staff want you to do even better. We have suggested a couple of things that will help you even more. Firstly, we have asked the school to make sure that you all make good progress by checking how well you are doing more regularly and to give you learning targets to work towards that you all understand.

Best wishes to all of you for the future.